

Book reviews

The sciatic syndrome

Henry Farfan (editor), 283 pages, Slack Inc., Chelsea 1996
ISBN 1-55642-243-1

That the main author of this book, Henry Farfan, spent most of his professional life studying the lumbar spine is evident from the bibliography in which rather old references can be found.

The book is primarily intended for spine specialists, but many other professionals, with the lumbar spine as their main interest, can profit from reading it, as it gives a very comprehensive description of many aspects of the lumbar spine.

The chapters on anatomy, biomechanics, and pathology provide a solid ground for the understanding of different therapeutic approaches, and make it clear why surgical treatment is advisable for only a minority of the patients.

The pain pattern and clinical signs of the sciatic syndrome are described in 41 pages, giving many important clues to every reader. For the different clinical signs the authors use personal names, perhaps more than one can remember.

In the chapter on *The kinetic chain*, the authors are concerned with the repercussions in other parts of the

musculoskeletal system when an injury is suffered in the lower back, and this is of interest to any orthopedic surgeon. The many pages concerning closed treatment and rehabilitation are of special importance for the spine surgeon.

In the chapter dealing with imaging techniques not even the hazards with ionizing radiation is forgotten.

The book needs careful reading to be fully understood. The smallness of the print does not facilitate reading. Another weak point is the part about surgical techniques which are discussed in 15 of the 283 pages but with no pictures. However, for this problem there are many good atlases. The book can be recommended for the experienced spine doctors who have other books on the subject in his library.

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Wrist instability

Ueli Büchler (editor), 224 pages, Martin Dunitz, London 1996
ISBN 1-85317-320-7

The wrist is perhaps the most complicated joint in the body. It permits movements in 3 planes—extension/flexion, ulnar deviation/radial deviation, and pronation/supination—and allows complex patterns of motion under significant strain. Optimal wrist function requires stability of the carpal components in all joint positions under static and dynamic conditions. Stability is achieved by a sophisticated geometry of articular surfaces and an intricate system of ligaments, retinacula, and tendons, which also determine the relative motion of the carpal bones.

Lesions causing wrist instability or carpal instability are related to either bone (fracture, non-union, malunion), ligaments (laxity, stretching, rupture) or

both. Affected articulations are the radiocarpal, distal radioulnar, scapholunate, lunotriquetral, midcarpal, carpometacarpal joints, or various combinations thereof. If not treated, wrist instability can cause pain, progressive limitation of motion, abnormal motion (clicks and snaps), late degenerative intercarpal and radiocarpal osteoarthritis, and disability. The classic article defining this topic was written 25 years ago. Since then, our understanding of these complex injuries has improved, but confusion still exists regarding their classification and management.

In the present book, Ueli Büchler has assembled 37 expert authors with special interest in wrist problems to write 27 chapters on functional anatomy, carpal ki-

netics, classification, clinical, arthroscopic and radiographic findings, as well as on special imaging techniques. There are also chapters dealing with the treatment of problems related to the specific articulations and outstanding chapters on wrist instability after fractures of the distal radius (D L Fernandez, W B Geissler, D M Lamey) and carpal collapse in rheumatoid arthritis (B R Simmen).

The editor has aimed to combine a rapidly expanding field with numerous papers from the last few years into a sound update about wrist problems and their management. The publication of this book was approved by the Federation of European Societies for Surgery of the Hand, and it was presented at the Third Congress of the Federation in Paris in 1966. Most of the contributing authors work in Europe, including 3 distinguished Scandinavian colleagues. There is an outstanding chapter by Carl-Göran Hagert on the distal radioulnar joint and the ulnocarpal junction. It contains well-documented and current information on functional anatomy and helps to improve our understanding of ulnar instability problems in the wrist. The chapter on wrist stability/wrist instability by Fredrik af Ekenstam is well written and has informative drawings, and the survey of traumatic wrist instability by Claus Falck Larsen is precise and includes an analytical method for assessing wrist instability.

In the chapter on the value of standard radiographs in diagnosing wrist instability, the authors (F Schuind, E Fumiére, S Sintzoff) stress that close interaction between the radiologist and the clinician is essential for

the correct diagnosis of instability problems. The initial routine radiographic examination must consist of standard anteroposterior and lateral views; more than 5 cm of the distal radius and ulna, the whole carpus and all 5 metacarpals should be included. Dynamic views, traction radiographs, cineradiography, or CT may be appropriate in selected cases, and the associated ligamentous lesions can be diagnosed by using either MRI or arthroscopy.

The chapters on clinical diagnosis of wrist instability (C Dumontier) and examination, imaging, and investigation of wrist instability (J Stanley) are very informative and remind us that most diagnoses of wrist instability are made on the basis of the history and the clinical examination. The special investigations are intended to identify the extent of the problems, to exclude other pathology, and to facilitate a precise diagnosis in order to select the appropriate treatment for a particular patient.

In summary, this is a valuable guide to the sometimes confusing spectrum of information about wrist pathology as it brings together, in a concise volume, the experiences of leaders in the field. The book adequately covers the area of wrist instability well, and it is warmly recommended to hand surgeons and orthopedic surgeons interested in wrist surgery.

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